

FULL CIRCLE
THE OTHONA COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER



Summer 2011

Contents

Editorial	3
From the Trustees	4
Nominations for Committee Members 2011	5
Bradwell Committee Meeting Feb 2011	8
Report from Burton Bradstock Committee	11
Burton Bradstock Report	12
News from Bradwell	13
Sale of East End Farm, Bradwell	14
A View On Atheism	15
A Garden Guide to Spirituality?	18
Rhythms of Life	20
Host UK	22
Obituaries	23
Mandala	24
Memories of a fun week at Bradwell	25
Annual General Meeting	26
A Crossword To Please You: answers	27

The Othona Community is an open Christian Community, whose purpose is to provide, mainly through its two centres in Essex and Dorset, a welcoming, accepting place with a pattern of work, worship, study and play where people of different beliefs, cultures, classes, abilities and ages can discover how to live together, learn from each other, explore together the relationship between faith and life with a view to more positive action in the world, and encourage one another in caring for the world and its people.

Deadline for Autumn Full Circle

November 1st 2011

Registered Charity No. 277843

Editorial

Paul and Ruth Gilman

Dear friends

We've just returned from a week at Burton Bradstock where Simon Small spoke about the Gospel of Thomas. We thought Simon was one of the most inspiring speakers we have ever heard. Simon talked about the importance of taking time out for contemplation, appreciating the wonder of the cosmos and our place within it, and of living in the present moment, surely part of what Jesus meant when he said that he had come so that we might have life more abundantly.

In this issue on page 15 we include an article entitled "A View on Atheism" which Simon Small has written for us. After our discussions relating to Dave Seckleman's article "Inclusiveness and the 'A' Word" we thought Simon's view would be helpful.

How lucky we are to have our two beautiful centres where we can draw close to the natural world, both ideal places for contemplation. How lucky we are that at these centres we can be inspired by such wonderful speakers and meet such a rich variety of people. Is there anywhere else like Othona? Did you know that Othona, Bradwell, has been listed as one of the eight best retreats in Europe? (See the minutes of the February Bradwell committee meeting.)

With our love

Ruth and Paul

From the Trustees

Sheila Maxey

Dear Othona members and friends

At our June meeting we received the unwelcome but not entirely unexpected news that Gail and Matthew would be retiring from Bradwell in May 2012. By then they will have served the Community at Bradwell for 5 years – good years and getting better all the time. They have, most generously, given us lots of time to find a new warden and other long-term core. It is the trustees' responsibility to appoint the warden to either centre, but that responsibility is being delegated to the Bradwell Staffing Group. This consists of the Warden and three members closely involved in the life at Bradwell – Chris Jones, Ann Froggatt, and Clare Stone -and four trustees – Rupert Bragg ,Jan Marshall, Fran Jones, and myself.

Our first act is to circulate as widely as possible the following notice:

Gail Dell, the resident Warden of the Bradwell Centre of the Othona Community has announced that she (and her husband, Matthew, her co-warden and facilities manager) will be retiring by May 2012. Othona Bradwell is situated on the Essex marshes, full of wild-life, but also remote and sometimes desolate. Nearby is the ancient chapel of St Peter's on the Wall, looking out over the Blackwater estuary, and the Community uses it for its worship. It is a place of welcome and simple living, often noisy and hectic with up to 50 visitors of all ages, and then, mid-week in winter, desperately quiet.

Over the coming months the Othona Trustees, through the Bradwell Staffing Group, will be beginning the search for the successor(s) to such a well-loved couple.

Sheila Maxey, chair of trustees.

Sheila.maxey@pop3.poptel.org.uk

We have a new patron – Michael Morpurgo, the children's author and former Children's Laureate and the founder of City Farms, a charity

which offers deprived city children a taste of the country. Sadly, Phil Melling, one of our trustees, has had to resign for the present because of pressure of work. He will continue to guide Bradwell to its new website and to serve on the trustees' budget group.

Also at our June meeting we planned the next stage in the timetable for our ***Othona 2010 taking stock and moving forward process*** which we expect to come to an end by January 2012. The BB Collaborative Group has been giving time and thought to ***moving forward*** which could involve constitutional and structural changes. Now it is time for everyone else to get involved. The paper (s) outlining the BB Collaborative Group's thinking thus far will be ready by the end of July. I will circulate that work by email so that it can provide a spring-board, I hope, for reflection and creative thinking throughout the Community but especially at the Bradwell open committee day on Saturday 20th August and then at the AGM on 17th September.

We hope this timetable, tackled with openness and honesty and the good of the whole of Othona in our hearts, will lead us beyond any entrenched positions through a ferment of discussion to a place none of us can, at present, foresee.

It is a matter of stepping out in faith. Are you up for it?

With love
Sheila Maxey, chair of trustees.

Nominations for Committee Members 2011

Ruth Bull

Each Centre of the Othona Community, Bradwell and Burton Bradstock, has its own committee. Each committee includes up to six nominated/elected members, plus others who are co-opted for their skills and experience. Each year, according to the current committee system, some elected members of these committees stand down and may be eligible for re-election. Any adult who is a subscribed Othona

member may be nominated by another subscribed adult Member, in the same way as those standing for re-election.

Following the call for nominees in Spring Full Circle we had a number of nominations for each committee, sufficient to fill all vacancies but not enough to require an election.

For Bradwell: Chris Jones and Dave Bull continue for at least a further year without re-election. This means there are four vacancies. We received nominations for Rosie Sinden-Evans to stand again, nominated by Janet Marshall; and for Ann Frogatt nominated by Chris Jones, Linda Clover nominated by Janet Marshall, and Jonney Aldridge nominated by Ann Frogatt, all currently co-opted members.

For Burton Bradstock: Harry Titley, Jan de Vulder, Carole Atkins and Lindy Brett continue for at least a further year without re-election. Two further members have been nominated, both currently serving and eligible for re-election. They are Elizabeth Sayers nominated by Carole Atkins; and Julie Walker nominated by Clare McDermott.

Each has provided a mini CV for election purposes - not now needed, so I am limiting this article to CVs only. Hopefully you will meet your committee members at the AGM, when with no election there will be more time for hearing, sharing and contributing in others ways to the life of the community.

For The Burton Bradstock Committee

Elizabeth Sayers

Othona at Burton Bradstock has been my spiritual community since 1997. As a committee member and chair I am keen to continue actively contributing my skills in people management, business management, and facilitation. I support the Warden and core and the trustees so we work together to develop good ways of managing that will enable Othona to thrive. I am committed to helping Othona so that it can continue to fulfil its unique, important role and live its Open Christian values.

Julie Walker

I have been part of the Burton Bradstock Committee for a number of years now, first co-opted and latterly elected. My work life is largely in psychotherapy private practice, but I have also taken on ecological work over the years and spend much of my 'spare' time on my allotment or in the garden. This range of experience has enabled me to contribute more specifically to the sub-groups (task teams) for 'Garden & Grounds' and 'People Support'. More recently I've also been part of the 'Heart & Soul' group. A particular interest of mine is encouraging and facilitating interaction with nature and exploring the benefits this has for our well-being. Being part of the committee, with our remit to support the warden and core has been a fulfilling role and one which I hope to continue.

For the Bradwell Committee

Jonney Aldridge

I have been coming to both of our centres for a while now (1961). Outside of the Community I have spent most of my working life in electronics but more recently in horticulture. I also have experience and qualifications in natural therapies. I hate the baggage associated with Christianity, which is why I say I try to follow Christ's teaching. I believe passionately that the Community is part of God's plan and that stewardship of the environment is part of that. I believe that I can help represent our members and that my experience and skills are useful to the committee.

Linda Clover

My name is Linda Clover and I have been a regular and frequent visitor to both centres for 30 years as Othona is very important to me. Although not a regular church goer I enjoy the diversity of the Chapel services at Othona and the acceptance given freely by everyone I have met during my visits. I hope the Community will continue this mission of acceptance and welcome of diversity. Since co-option last year I have actively sought to promote increasing membership and encouragement of young people to visit especially at Bradwell by assisting Gail with outreach. I also bring a wide range of office skills useful to the committee.

Ann Froggatt

I have been coming to Bradwell since 1995. I came for a cheap holiday with four young children, and kept coming back, getting more involved in various aspects over the years. I have been part of the summer helper's team, cooked and led art weeks. I am an art teacher, but I have had a wide employment history, with over 10 years experience in administrative roles. For the past five years I have been taking minutes for the Bradwell Committee, a necessary but not glamorous role, and am Chair of the Fundraising committee. I aim to support the Wardens and the Community, in continuing to provide a welcoming, spiritually refreshing place for all.

Rosie Sinden-Evans

Now in my fifth decade of Othona membership, I have spent wonderful times at Bradwell and Burton Bradstock, including this spring, and am equally committed to both centres. Since joining the Bradwell Committee, I have worked on the Programme-Planning Group, currently as Chair; the Fund-Raising Group, co-ordinating contact with members about our new building; and am involved in developing resources for our wide-ranging worship. I work as a Performing Arts Librarian; sing, play or listen to music whenever possible; value friendships and enjoy being solitary. Searching, questioning, reflecting and dreaming are all important to me and I try to encourage the Committee to make space for this amongst all its practical business. I am glad that Othona welcomes and makes use of us all.

Bradwell Committee Meeting Feb 2011

Chris Jones

This, our first meeting of 2011, followed a very successful and productive working week. The following report is a summary of the main agenda items.

Future Staffing

The Bradwell Staffing Group, led by Rupert Bragg, has been constituted by the trustees to meet the immediate need to recruit a cook/coordinator and consider possible models for staffing in the

future. The group are still deliberating but currently favour a staffing model consisting of 4-5 paid core staff committed to at least a year of service and supplemented by a team of volunteers through the summer season. Core posts should include the warden(s), 2-3 deputies and a cook/coordinator.

Publicity

Gail Dell reported that work on the new website is now far advanced with most of the text having been written and graphics prepared. The review process should be completed to allow publication of the site by the end of March. The recent listing of Othona, Bradwell in the good retreat guide and subsequent mention in the Sunday Telegraph in a list of the "Eight Best Retreats in Britain and Europe":

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/activityandadventure/8308763/Eight-of-the-best-retreats-in-Britain-and-Europe.html>

has been a welcome but entirely unexpected bonus and it is hoped that this may result in some additional bookings this summer. Gail would welcome details of any contacts that members may have for groups could use the centre during weekdays in the spring, autumn or winter.

Solar Building

Building control sign-off is currently scheduled for 14 March and much of the work towards this is complete or well under way. Many thanks to all those who came to the working week and worked hard to tackle the outstanding tasks.

Farm Sale & Access

The sale of the farm is proceeding slowly but steadily. Negotiations with Strutt & Parker regarding the ownership and maintenance of the track have been protracted. It has been agreed that ownership of the track will remain with Othona and that S & P will contribute to maintenance costs, but not on the existing 50 / 50 basis. The standard of maintenance under the existing agreement has, in any case, long been unsatisfactory and the state of the track is currently very poor. Gail and Matthew are currently compiling options and estimates and have asked the trustees to consider bearing the cost of this work as a necessary consequence of the sale.

Bradwell Budget for 2011

The budget for Bradwell has been agreed for 2011 and proposed to the Trustee's Working Group. Even after an increase of 7% (including 2.5% for VAT), a deficit of around £6K is forecast. Rupert presented some interesting calculations of average per capita income at just £21.48 per night which is in part a consequence of the family rate and of the relatively high rate of concessions.

Fund-raising

Recent fund-raising efforts have been well supported and enabled re-insulation of the core block loft and sufficient funds for improvements to the showers in the Norman Motley building. These are to include a new pump that will boost pressure to all the showers and replacement of the floor in the disabled bathroom.

Internet Access

The last decade has seen a massive growth in the ownership and use of portable electronic devices and Bradwell has not been immune with many members bringing laptops and other similar equipment with them. After a wide ranging discussion it was agreed that we will continue to support the existing policy of discouraging the use of such devices at Bradwell, on the basis that experience has shown that they reduce and inhibit the real human interaction that is at the heart of the Othona community experience. It is also very hard to persuade the kids to leave their gaming consoles behind when confronted with adults immersed in their laptops. However, we do recognise that some members are, on occasion, only able to visit the centre on the basis that they maintain contact with their work, and that occasional checking of emails is necessary when visiting for longer periods. To this end it was agreed that the WiFi access will be limited to a period of up to an hour in the evening and that the back office will be available for those who need to use a computer.

Pastoral Care

One idea that came up during the staffing group meeting was the idea of creating a volunteer post for a "chaplain". Gail and Matthew find themselves frequently in the position of trying to provide emotional support or a listening ear; but with so much else to do find that they are often unable to give sufficient time to this and would welcome having

someone on the team from May to August who could take on this kind of work. This role would not replace that of the chaplain, though the incumbent may be able to assist in this way outside of the main summer weeks or in circumstances where nobody is available to fill the chaplain role. A suitable title for the post is under consideration in order to avoid the confusion.

Report from Burton Bradstock Committee

Elizabeth Sayers

We met on Saturday June 25th for one day, as the Collaborative Group met on Sunday 26th. The updates from core members are always interesting and helpful. This time we heard how our newest core members are settling in and adjusting to the work and the change in lifestyle.

The reports from the 7 task teams are a very good way of reporting on progress of the important aspects of running Othona West Dorset. You may already have experienced the results of the work of the Heart and Soul task team. They helped develop the framework for chapel, Seed Time and Harvest. We discussed how we can encourage visitors adapt it to or create their own form of chapel if they prefer.

In the afternoon we had a short briefing and discussion on where the Collaborative Group have got to. Up to now the content of their discussions has been confidential. As you see from Sheila's Report from Trustee Chair, their work will be open to wider discussion during August and September. The trustees and the Collaborative Group are keen for Othona visitors/members to read the papers, discuss the proposals and feedback their views to the trustees. We are arranging an extra meeting for the Othona West Dorset Committee to get together for this purpose on August 13th. In the afternoon we will have an Open Forum for BB locals and anyone else interested. The news will be on the BB website. Please come if you are in the area.

Our other OWD committee meetings in 2011 are September 18th and November 19th/20th

Burton Bradstock Report

Jane Robinson

The last edition saw us coming out of a winter which saw the heaviest snowfall for 15 years and now, four months later, it's lush and green and warm and I sit looking at a glorious sunset at 9.30pm. The community at Burton Bradstock has similarly grown. We were joined soon after our last bulletin by our new caterer Chiara Santamaria and Shaun McDonald our new deputy warden, and more recently by Kerry as a short term core member. This has swollen our resident community to nine as opposed to the four living here this time last year. The new community includes three couples and we are housed in two separate buildings, the Lodge and Largesse, which are situated at opposite ends of the site. The larger community and the 'two household' status has brought with it challenges in how we relate to each other, communicate and also build and retain a sense of being one community.

This is all happening of course against a backdrop of social change and constraint. We have seen later bookings for events and I have the impression that we are seeing more visitors from Dorset and adjoining counties and less from further afield as the cost of travel increases. We are seeing some of our regular visitors less often, but there is also a steady stream of new faces. It seems that people have to be more selective about how they spend their precious resources of time and money, but the need for the acceptance, companionship and nourishment that Othona provides seems as strong as ever. Responding to their need and our own desire to survive has led us to look with fresh eyes at how and where we promote what we do. We live in an age where the internet is probably the main source of information for the majority of the population and we have been looking at ways to make sure that a Google search will bring up Othona as often as possible for anyone who might be interested in what we do. And, of course, we also continue to question what we offer. What Othona West Dorset doesn't offer is en suite up-to-date facilities, but it does offer a relaxed homely atmosphere and an experience of community which seems to be in short supply. It's Othona's strength

and we need to let anyone who is interested be aware of our existence.

We have also just held the second of our 'Cream Tea days' which have proved a valuable way of letting local people discover who we are and dispelling the myths that we are a monastic community, an ex convent school or just a bunch of weirdos, and we are looking at taking part in other local or Dorset based activities in the future. Local support has always been important here. Core members may come and go (and some of them become 'locals'), but it is the locals who provide the continuity for long term projects like our polytunnel. Their support and love for Othona can always humble me.

So then, a challenging time but one which offers opportunities for creative problem solving and a chance to develop new skills. I hope we're rising to meet them successfully. What we all do is of such value, especially in such difficult social times, long may it continue.

News from Bradwell

Gail and Matthew Dell

Calling all late bookers – you know who you are!!!

OK, so we know Bradwellians are notoriously late at booking their summer dates but it would help us to be organised, if any of you are planning on coming this summer, to let us know soon.

As you may have read earlier from Sheila, this will be our last summer as wardens and it would be great to see you some time.

Saturday – Sunday 20th & 21st August 2011

Some of you will no doubt be aware that Martin (No 1) Gingell was married to Roxanne in May of this year. It is their wish to share their happiness with their Othona friends. They will be having a Chapel service early in the afternoon to bless their marriage followed by a party in the evening. Please do come and be here for this special day.

The Open Meeting of the Bradwell Committee was originally programmed to be held on Saturday 20th it will now take place on Sunday 21st at 11.00am this is your opportunity to engage with current issues at Bradwell, contribute to discussions and ask questions.

Turkey & Tinsel

Monday 5th – Thursday 8th December

We are sure many of you would like to experience an Othona Christmas but due to other commitments find it difficult to get away during Christmas week. This is an opportunity to experience the wonder that is Christmas at Othona—just a little bit early!! Take some time out to be here with friends and family before the hustle and bustle begins. Walk on the beach, curl up in front of the log fire and enjoy the company. Delicious Christmas fare, carols round the piano and tree dressing.

With love in Christ

Sale of East End Farm, Bradwell

Rupert Bragg

The Othona Community farm property, East End Farm, Bradwell, was put up for sale several years ago and despite initial lack of interest during the first two years the property was eventually sold, subject to contract, last year to the sitting farm tenant, Strutt & Parker Farms Ltd, for the agreed sum of £1,050,000. The freehold for all the land and buildings comprising the farm was sold except the access track which remains within the ownership of Othona. We decided to retain the track in order to protect the one and only access to the Bradwell Community site and to control the standards and frequency of track maintenance. Also, there are a number of other restrictions and covenants included in the sale details designed to protect the Community's future interest.

The sale proceeds could be used to make capital improvements to the Community sites at Bradwell and Burton Bradstock, to invest for the

generation of future income or to do a combination of both – some major improvements and some investments. The Trustees decided to invest the whole of the net sale proceeds into safe, secure and ethical investments in order to provide a significant increase our annual income and to help secure Othona’s financial future. The new investment income should double that which was being received by way of farm rental and should provide a useful financial “safety net”, help to stabilise our cash flow position and help to increase operating reserves which in turn can be redistributed to the individual Centres for local improvements.

In parallel with the farm sale going through, we selected and set up arrangements with Epworth Investment Management to handle our investment of the net farm sale proceeds and agreed the outline of our investment portfolio which broadly speaking is 25% in property, 50% in stock market equities and 25% in fixed interest bonds. Epworth is part of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church and is one of the leading firms specialising in charitable and equitable investments. Final completion of the sale took place on 6th May 2011. The balance of the purchase price was transferred to our solicitor on that day. On the same day, our solicitor transferred the full sale price, less disbursements, fees and final rental adjustments, to the Othona account set up within Epworth Investment Management.

If anyone would like any further information about the farm sale or the investments, please contact me, Rupert Bragg, by e-mail (rupert.bragg@googlemail.com) or by telephone (01379 855171)

A View On Atheism

Simon Small

We seem to be going through a period of particularly intense public debate between the proponents of faith and atheism.

I am aware that this debate has been reflected recently within the Othona Community. As a friend and admirer of Othona, although not a

member, I have been asked to offer my thoughts as an aid to the conversation.

The debate can be especially disturbing to those whose faith is a deep, intuitive feeling which struggles to answer the relentlessly rational arguments of the polemical atheist. It can be very difficult when someone tries to wrench away what has provided meaning and purpose to life, often for many years. It can also be difficult to witness the next generation rejecting the “truths” it has been brought up with and, perhaps, even turning its fire on those who sought to inculcate the now rejected faith.

I write as one who rejected Christianity as a teenager and would subsequently have described himself as an atheist, but who then in later life (after exploring many different spiritual pathways) found himself being ordained a priest in Worcester Cathedral. I write also as someone who’s twenty-something year old son currently describes himself as an atheist and reverences Christopher Hitchens.

One way of writing this article would be to join in with the intellectual ping pong that goes on between the two camps. But in doing this I would not be adding anything new to the already well-rehearsed debate. I am more interested in bringing light to bear than generating more smoke.

Instead, I would like to ask my brothers and sisters in faith whether, in our understandable sense of being threatened by the confrontation, we are not missing the silver lining it may have. I also want to ask, very gently, whether we may not be to blame for the seeming rise of atheism because of the way in which we have shared the Christian path.

The first silver thread I see is that I am so pleased that my son even cares about the question. Actually, he cares about it passionately. He lives in a society lost in consumerism and the pursuit of pleasure, yet the God question really matters to him. For so many it is irrelevant, but he puts great energy into reading and thinking about the arguments.

If I wanted to be provocative, I could suggest that he (and those like him) may care about the subject more than many religious people, for

whom faith is a matter of convention, up-bringing and belonging, and who perhaps have never asked themselves the big questions that arise.

And this leads on to the second silver thread. Our atheistic friends are making us think about our faith and awakening us from the semi-comatose religious haze into which it is so easy to drift. We are being reminded that traditional Christianity makes extraordinary claims that the highly educated western mind is, quite rightly, going to struggle with. Maybe we are being challenged to awaken to our own doubts and go deeper.

But the main suggestion I would like to make is that we bear heavy responsibility for the current strength of atheism because of the way the Christian faith has been presented. I was brought up to believe that Christianity was a set of beliefs, verbal formulas that one either believed or rejected. It was an intellectual assent. At its heart was the bizarre claim that a man rose from the dead. At an intellectual level, I was always eventually going to reject this, as I did at the age of thirteen when I refused to be confirmed. Looking back, I'm really pleased that I did. To have accepted this would, then, have been either a lie or the product of a refusal to think.

My re-entry into religious thought came about because years later I was shown another way. I was introduced to religion as a way of exploration, rather than something that required me to assent to mind-boggling beliefs.

I was shown that the place to start this exploration was with the awesome mystery of the present moment. Through learning how to still my mind it became self-evident that we have no idea who or what we are; that we do not know what anything around us is for, or even why anything exists at all. We swim in the unknown.

Against this backdrop of mystery the insights of science, philosophy and different religions ceased to be in competition. Instead they became marvellous jewels in the darkness, each giving a unique glimpse of what lies beyond. The mystery also became a great meeting ground where I could stand with others who thought very differently to me, but for whom the mystery was also infinitely more

real. I can stand shoulder to shoulder with my son, both of us speechless before the night sky.

Eventually in the depths of the stillness I sensed a loving presence reaching back, which I have since tasted in many other ways. When I then came back to Christian ideas, it was from a different direction, enabling them to light-up in a new way and be embraced. But I was always left with the sense that the words and ideas were no more than pointers trying to evoke a reality they could never contain; that truth was ultimately an experience beyond concepts.

This is religion as a new form of consciousness, rather than a set of ideas to be accepted or rejected. It is a way that undermines false certainty, whether religious or otherwise. It constantly reminds us of the awesome mystery of existence, which can only produce humility.

I would like to suggest that this is a way of sharing the religious path that is utterly appropriate for the twenty first century western mind. It encourages discovery rather than belief.

And this way is utterly Christian. It is the path of the contemplative and is an expression of the apophatic tradition; the way of the Mystery of God. Unfortunately, over time it has been almost lost from mainstream church life. In previous centuries perhaps this did not matter too much, but with the mass rise of the highly educated western mind, bedazzled by the magnificent achievements of science, a heavy price is now being paid.

So I would suggest that this current encounter with atheism offers important insights - if we are prepared to reflect, rather than react.

A Garden Guide to Spirituality?

Fiona Heyes

By the time you read this it will probably be high Summer, with brilliant blue skies, balmy or barmy evenings depending on your preference, and a surfeit of sun lotion, or so we hope. But as I write this, March is coming to an end, daffodils and narcissus are blowing their own

trumpets, the new leaves are just showing on my hazel and spindles, and the bluebells are about to 'happen'. The garden has started to do its Spring thing and come alive with buds, bursting with the promise of the Summer yet to come. But it isn't coming alive, because the garden is always alive, it's new every day, 365 days a year.

I'm one of the lucky ones, having a garden. There have been times in my life when that wasn't so, and I was the poorer for it. I was looking in wonder at a Snakes head Fritillary this morning, a nodding head patterned with the most exquisite purple and white geometric design, and that saying about "consider the lilies of the field" came to mind. Find yourself a picture of one, it'll be worth it.

The celandines are glowing like mini suns everywhere, the grape hyacinths explode in swathes of blue, and the hellebores hang their heads in white and purple speckled gloriousness. But it didn't all just happen that way! How well I remember planting each bulb and seedling, hundreds of them, each one reminding me that my back and knees weren't what they once were, but it was worth it, oh boy, was it worth it!

It's all a bit like life really, we have to work towards where we're going. You have the sunny days and the severe frosty days, the hard working days and the watching the grass growing days, it takes them all to make a garden. I enjoy nature in my garden, but have to work hard finding the balance between aphid-eating ladybirds, cats looking for a convenient loo, the wren seeking insects in the wood pile, and slugs. Why did the Creator make slugs?

Both in my garden and at Othona I learn to work towards what is good, accepting all that's good and not so good, and doing what I can to share my joys. Gardening seems to have a lot in common with the spiritual life don't you think?

Editor's note: Dave's poem was written at this year's spring retreat at Bradwell at the request of Nihal Paul, who was leading the retreat. The poem is dedicated to Nihal.

Rhythms of Life

David Birdseye

Rhythms of joyfulness, rhythm and blues
Rhythms of wakefulness, sleep, and of dream
Rhythms to mesmerise, sadden, amuse
"Rhythms of life through prayer" is our theme

The rhythm of life is a heartbeat
The first comforting sound that we hear
In the womb as we form and take substance
Until into this world we appear

Thereafter, we have our own rhythm
A pulse that pronounces "I live!"
A pulse so persistent, yet subtle
We scarcely a second thought give

The seasons themselves each have rhythm
With winter, spring, summer and fall
You'll blossom and grow if you go with the flow
Though your back be against a brick wall

And even the planets have rhythm
As they spin in their orbits through space
Yes, everything vibrates and pulsates
Every thing has its pace and its place

If God's like electrical current
Then people are like light bulbs, I guess
Just that some souls have higher wattage
Whilst others have decidedly less

The more often you plug yourself in -
Into God's inexhaustible source
The brighter the light in which to delight
You will glow, as a matter of course

Some march to a beat unrelenting
Others move to a different drum
There's a rhythm for all, both big and small
Some pick and pluck, others just strum

Even I have a sense of rhythm
(Though it doesn't extend to my feet)
I dance like a three-legged hippo
As I try to keep time to the beat

With the grace of a crippled came!
The refinement of a rampant rhino
Folk look askance as I strive to dance
Thinking "Look at that lumbering wino!"

Rhythm of metre, rhythm of verse
Rhythms supernal, rhythms supreme
Rhythms pervading the whole universe
"Rhythms of life through prayer " is our theme

And all of life would become a prayer
Writes Michel Quoist, and I believe
All life would become a sign, should we share
Our fruits with each other. Ask Adam and Eve

Host UK

Robin and Mrs J.R. Bunce

Quite a few people will have heard of this scheme, which enables foreign students to meet British residents in their own homes.

I have hosted students for more than ten years now; no more than twice a year, perhaps for two or three nights. It is very rewarding and they are so grateful, for otherwise, although perhaps at an English UNI for a year (generally doing a master's degree) they might not get an experience of how we live!

Unhappily the government is withdrawing funding (the universities do help), but HOST are really keen to keep going and they are appealing for more hosts, which it seems could help to solve the problem.

So do please respond if you can; and of course if you happen to know of a charitable trust who might help, please let HOST know. Are you an employee or pensioner of a company with a corporate social responsibility programme, which might be interested in the work of HOST?

The HOST office is:
Unit 8 Water house
8 Orsman Road
London N1 5QJ
Tel: 020 7739 6292 Fax: 020 7033 6539

Charity number: 327592 Email: info@hostuk.org www.hostuk.org

Who knows? Hosting a student might lead to some of the students volunteering to be short term core members at one of the Othona centres.

Obituaries

Joyce Wildbore Meadows ***14 December 1914 – 5 June 2011***

I first met Joyce in the late 1950s, when she and Robert arrived one day at Bradwell in their elderly Rolls Royce. In contrast to Robert's quiet gravity, Joyce looked the artist she was, as colourful as her gregarious and often mischievous personality, which remained all her life. Full of creative ideas, Joyce's work reflected her life: as an activist and supporter of numerous causes throughout her life, she created colourful posters and banners in her inimitable style for, amongst others, CND, peace movements and women's groups. In the early 1990s she designed the existing cover for Full Circle, with its image of joining hands around the world.

Joyce and Robert were involved in the Community from its early days as loyal supporters, giving of their time and gifts to both centres.

Joyce's funeral in St Peter's Church, Notting Hill, which she loved, was a lovely occasion, the church full of her beloved family and the friends she and Robert had nurtured during their long lives. For those who knew and loved them, their going marks the end of an era.

Sue Theobald

Mandala

Joyce Meadows



This is the mandala which Joyce used in much of her work.

Audrey Vinicombe

Audrey died peacefully in hospital on 28th June. An obituary for her will be included in the next issue.

Memories of a fun week at Bradwell

Linda Clover



Ex-warden and trustee Tim Fox tries his hand at juggling.



Fiery face has the last laugh!

Annual General Meeting

**THE OTHONA COMMUNITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AND REUNION**

**Takes place FROM 2pm on
SATURDAY 17th SEPTEMBER**

at

**THE LOWER CHURCH HALL, ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,
SHORT ST, WATERLOO SE1 8LJ.**

<http://www.stjohnswaterloo.co.uk/>

**ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
INCLUDING those using WHEELCHAIRS.**

Programme:

2pm welcome tea or coffee

**2.30pm the Othona Community AGM – hear, share,
contribute and worship**

5pm Bring-&-Share Tea: your Food contributions please

6pm finish – or time to socialize locally!

**Location: Between Waterloo and Southwark Stations
down Waterloo Rd, turn left up the Cut or from
Southwark turn right down The Cut short St Turning is
almost opposite the Young Vic Theatre.**

A Crossword To Please You: answers

Ruth Gilman

			d				m					l			
	w	a	i	t		s	a	b	b	a	t	i	c	a	l
	o		f				g		i			n			
c	r	a	f	t	s		i		r			d		t	
	k		e				c		d		f	i	r	e	
			r	a	b	b	i	t	s			s		a	
r	a	t	e		i		a					f			t
			n		o		n		t	h	e	a	t	r	e
			t		d							r			x
	m	u	d		a					w	i	n	g		t
			r		n		a					e			i
			u		z		f	o	c	u	s		a	l	l
f	a	r	m		a		r					t			e
	h			b		r	i	n	g		b	o	o	k	s
t	a	i	z	e			c					l			
							p	a	i	n	t	e	d		

WHO'S WHO

WARDEN, BRADWELL

Gail Dell, Othona Community, East Hall Farm, East End Road, Bradwell-on-Sea, Southminster, Essex, CM0 7PN Tel 01621 776564
Email bradwell@othona.org Website www.bos.othona.org

WARDEN, BURTON BRADSTOCK

Tony Jaques, Othona Community, Coast Road, Burton Bradstock, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 4RN Tel 01308 897130
Email mail@othona-bb.org.uk Website www.othona-bb.org.uk

TRUSTEE CHAIR

Sheila Maxey, 48 St. Thomas' Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4DF
Tel/Fax 01277 212357 Email trusteechair@othona.org

BRADWELL CHAIR

Chris Jones, 42 Hedgemoad Avenue, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 2NJ
Tel 01235 525558 Email boschair@othona.org

BURTON BRADSTOCK CHAIR

Elizabeth Sayers, 110 Tinkers Lane, Windsor, SL4 4LP Tel 01753 779719
Email bbchair@othona.org

COMMUNITY TREASURER

Stephen Mortimer, 257 Linnet Drive, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8AZ
Tel 01245 600505 Email communitytreasurer@othona.org

COMMUNITY SECRETARY

Ruth Bull, 5 Coastguard Cottages, Mill End, Bradwell-on-Sea, CM0 7HN
Tel 01621 776565 Email communitysecretary@othona.org

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Christine Cox, 269 Ladyshot, Harlow, Essex, CM20 3EY
Tel 01279 438213 Email membershipsecretary@othona.org

FULL CIRCLE EDITORS

Ruth and Paul Gilman, 36 Rydal Way, Great Notley, Essex, CM77 7UG
Tel 01376 331452 Email fullcircleditor@othona.org

Community Website www.othona.org